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AN APPEAL

TO THE

CITIZENS OF MICHIGAN,

SHOWING

THE NECESSITY OF THE EARLY COMPLETION

OF THE

GREAT WESTERN RAIL WAY,

FROM

DETROIT TO THE NIAGARA RIVER.

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DETROIT:

HARMON, BRODHEAD & CO., PRINTERS.

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The following article was prepared for and published in the Detroit Free Press. The subject is one of such vital importance to Michigan, that it has been deemed advisable to publish it in a pamphlet form, for more general circulation and preservation. The facts stated are derived from the most authentic sources. The distances or length of the various lines of road on the north and south shores of Lake Erie, are taken from the Reports of Engineers, and may be relied upon as correct.

DETROIT, March 17, 1851.

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## CANADA RAILWAY.

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As the citizens of Michigan will soon be appealed to for aid to help build the rail road from Windsor, opposite this city, to the Niagara river, it will be well to examine the advantages and benefits which we shall secure by the early completion of this road. That the construction of railways are of great benefit to the country, no one will deny. Boston has expended millions of dollars to open communications with the interior of New England, and has reaped a rich reward in the increase of her trade, and in the value of her real estate. New York for a long period felt secure in her position, and thought to bid defiance to all the efforts of her rivals, Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore, but found at last it was necessary to put forth her mighty energies to maintain her position as the great emporium of the continent. These efforts of the rival cities, have brought in to existence several lines of railways, starting from their respective points, and having for their object to command and control the trade and travel of the "Great West."

The several lines having this object in view, are the roads from Boston to Ogdensburg, the roads leading from Boston and New York to Buffalo, and from thence to be pushed forward on the south shore of Lake Erie, through Ohio and Indiana to St. Louis; the Pennsylvania road leading from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, and from thence connecting with the great Central Route through Ohio, Indiana and Illinois to Missouri; and the Baltimore and Ohio rail road, connecting Baltimore with the central roads of Ohio, and thus finding their way to St. Louis.

It will be seen that all these routes fail to reach us, unless we can have a road constructed through the Province of Upper Canada, from Niagara to the Detroit or St. Clair river, and there connecting with the Michigan Central Railway.

Within a year from the present time, *four* of these great lines of railway will reach Ohio, viz: the New York central line, by the Lake shore road, the New York and Erie road, the Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh, and the Baltimore and Ohio road. While these roads are being pushed forward with all the celerity attainable by active and energetic men, having an unlimited amount of money at their command, Ohio and Indiana are pushing forward their roads so as to meet them, and Illinois has just chartered a road with branches from Cairo to Chicago, which runs the whole length of the State, to be finished in two years, and Wisconsin is already moving so as to connect with these various lines, or channels of communication with the great Atlantic cities.

While we see all these active operations going on around us, for the purpose of furnishing all of the northwestern states with an easy access and continuous communication with New York, what have the citizens of Michigan done, or what do they propose to do towards opening such roads as may be necessary to connect with some one or more of the lines of communication. As yet she has done nothing. Not a dollar has been subscribed, nor an effort been made to procure such a subscription. None of these lines will help nine-tenths of the territory of our State. The nearest will be the south shore road, touching at Toledo and running thence west through the northern counties of Indiana, or perhaps for a short time over the Southern Railroad, if that is continued west from its present terminus. All these lines are far to the south of us, with no means to connect with them, and even if we had the means, not desirable, by reason of the greatly increased distance over the Canada route.

Unless we move ourselves and induce others to do so also, we may rest assured that in less than three years, and probably before our legislature will meet again, Michigan will be far behind all of her sister states of the West as to facilities for trade and commerce. Michigan, with all of her natural advantages, cannot compete with those lying farther from market than she does. We shall be locked up by the ice for three, and perhaps five months of the year—our business suspended, our markets dormant—while our less favored competitors, from their own activity and perseverance, by putting their own shoulders to the wheel instead of calling for others to help, without an effort themselves, will enjoy an active business for the entire year without any hindrance or obstruction.

No one can well calculate the disadvantages under which a community or state would labor, which was cut off for even *one-third* of the year, from a market, compared with one always having a rapid and easy communication. It is almost like the loss of *one-third* of the active energies of the business men of the state. If indolence in individuals is disastrous, so it is to states. And no amount of activity on our part, for the eight months when navigation is open, will compensate for the loss of time when we are shut off from all communication save by the stage coach.

It is well known that thousands upon thousands are prevented from even visiting us in the summer season by reason of fear of crossing Lake Erie, while in the winter we see no one, who is not compelled by absolute necessity to come here. We have complained of the travel and emigration passing by us, but the past is nothing to what the future will be, if we permit the great lines penetrating all of the surrounding states to be completed without making one effort to bring them to our own state. Instead of a few passing by, they will all go where we shall never see them. What inducement can we hold out to the emigrant when he finds that for *one-third of the time* he is shut out from all active business communication with the seaboard, as against those states having a continuous line of railway. We shall stand no chance.

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The rich and fertile lands of the northern portion of our state will remain an uncultivated wilderness, while the surrounding states will flourish like a garden. In years past, it has been deemed of sufficient importance to our state to appoint special agents to visit New York for the purpose of inducing emigrants to visit and settle within our state. This course was deemed necessary when the great thoroughfare was by water, and brought all of these emigrants in sight of Michigan. How much more difficult will it be to turn emigration here when the great thoroughfare shall pass entirely south of us, as it will, unless the Canada road is completed. Unless we can obtain a fair proportion of this emigration, we shall find our state far behind the other western states at the next census.

If we had no other argument to urge but the one already stated, that alone ought to be sufficient to induce us, as individuals, and a state, to use every effort within our means to open a communication with the rail roads of New York, through Canada.

But there are other reasons why we should aid this project, reasons which should convince all having the interests of Michigan at heart, some of which we will allude to before we are done with this subject.

The importance of the speedy construction of this road through Canada, so far as it will have an effect upon emigration to this state, has been alluded to. As you increase a community in numbers, you increase the talent and capacity. To give the most active and profitable employment to this business capacity, to make their industry the most profitable, requires a great diversity of pursuits. Hence, it has always been an object with those having the control of state affairs, to induce, as far as practicable without too much interference with individual interests, the establishment of manufactories of various kinds, in all agricultural districts. But it is settled by the experience of many years that manufacturing cannot be carried on successfully on a large scale, when the communication with the market is not continuous and reliable.

It is with reference to the manufacturing interests we wish now to present the importance of this rail road through Canada.

Our present able Governor in his last message alluded to the vast amount of water power within this state, which might profitably be used for manufacturing and mechanical purposes. When will this now unemployed force be brought into requisition? When the population within our own state and in its immediate vicinity shall need it—(which must be many years, if we let the tide of emigration pass around us instead of through the state)—or when there are safe, cheap, speedy, continuous and reliable modes of transportation connecting those districts fitted for manufacturing, with those places where the articles manufactured will always find a sure and fair market.

The manufactory of cotton was not attempted in Rochester, N. Y., until the Albany and Buffalo rail roads were allowed to carry freight, when the canal was closed. There are factories and machinery there now which would do credit to any community, and the business carried

on as successfully as in the eastern states, the low price of the necessities of life quite outweighing the extra cost in the transportation of that portion of the stock and cloths which have to go and come from an eastern market. Under the stimulus of these new enterprises, the city, which before had nearly ceased to grow, has taken a new start, and is now increasing as rapidly as at any former period, and furnishing a much better market than ever before, for the produce of the surrounding country.

We find the same thing true with other places. Indeed manufactories of any kind cannot be supported without an easy, safe and speedy access to market. Compel a manufacturing association of any description to hold its stock of raw material for nearly half the year, with no outlet for its manufactured articles for more than half of the year, and the amount of its dead capital compared with its active capital, is so large as to make it difficult if not wholly impossible to compete with those more favorably situated in the same business. This is especially burdensome and discouraging in a state like our own, where the value of capital is greater than it is in New York and New England.

It is this easy access to market throughout the entire year, by the construction of railways, which has given New England such a start of all the other portions of the Union in manufacturing.

In no agricultural community is the policy of a diversity of pursuits more wise than where the chief staple is wheat, the price of which is very fluctuating, and the crop the most uncertain of all the grains.

No state is better situated, geographically and physically, for most kinds of manufacturing, than Michigan, if it had a steady and reliable communication with the eastern markets throughout the entire year. Iron, copper and coal abound. Water power is abundant, and building materials cost only the labor of putting them into shape. The position of this state, if a great thoroughfare can be made to and through it for the transit of the raw material and the manufactured article, when ready for market, is unsurpassed. Many of the western merchants would find it for their interest to purchase here, rather than to incur the expense of seeking the same articles in a more distant market. Our iron and coal beds would be opened. The copper from the inexhaustible mines on Lake Superior would be manufactured into such articles as would be required here, instead of being transported to Pittsburgh or Boston, for the purpose of being smelted. And the wool, ranking as the second staple article of the state, would furnish employment for more labor than it takes to grow it.

All of these advantages, direct and immediate, to our state, are likely to be lost or postponed for an indefinite period, without we lend some efficient aid to the construction of the Canada railway.

We have treated this subject, so far, as one of gains, to be secured to our state, both in population and vastly increased business, and capital, by aiding this road by a liberal subscription of stock. But now we are about to speak of the daily losses, incurred by all classes of the community, for want of such a communication. Some may be surprised

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at this proposition, but it is nevertheless true. No one will deny but that the merchant requires a much larger capital to do a safe business here than he would, were he not cut off from supplies for so large a part of the year. This puts the profitable mercantile business into fewer hands, who can control the larger means necessary to that business here, above what is necessary to do the same business in more favored localities, while the farmer and the mechanic, constituting the customers of these merchants throughout the whole State, have to pay for the idleness of this extra capital required in the business, as well as for many other of the losses and disadvantages of locality, by the increased price necessarily put upon every thing in the retail trade.

The sale of the various kinds of merchandize is regulated as to the quantity, to a considerable extent by the price and quantity of produce with which the great majority of our people are directly or indirectly to pay for their goods. After navigation closes, if the price of produce falls below the average, the merchant finds his shelves loaded with goods, which he cannot sell, and he is obliged to carry them over to another season, for sale returns. The depreciation of value in such cases is very great, and the purchaser is compelled to take up with an inferior article, and one perhaps out of date, because of the misfortune compelling the trader to hold them over. If, on the other hand, the price of produce should be largely above the estimated or usual rates, the merchant finds himself short, and additional prices to the consumer are the necessary consequence.

But these losses do not arise alone from fluctuation in the price of our staple commodities. No merchant, however well informed, can foresee the wants of his customers for a long time ahead, so perfectly as not to over-purchase, or under purchase, to greater or less extent, a considerable proportion of the articles constituting his stock. The losses from causes of this nature, probably amount to at least twice or three times as much as the loss of interest, upon the value of goods purchased too early or out of season, because they cannot be brought here at a later period, when they are actually required, because navigation is suspended.

Before the completion of the Erie canal the merchants residing in the North-west, visited New York but once in the year, and were necessarily compelled to purchase a stock of goods sufficient to last for the year. The completion of that work made a vast change in this respect, and the completion of the Railroads through New York has worked almost as much of a change as the canal. Now many of our merchants purchase three or four times during the season of navigation, rather than incur the loss of interest and the danger of accumulating an unsalable stock of goods by purchasing in the spring and fall alone.

We had hoped to have been able to lay before our readers some statistics which would have shown the loss to various interests for want of a railroad from here to Buffalo. But we have been disappointed. We can only approximate to it. The imports will be, by the time the

Road could be finished, if commenced now, about \$8,000,000—say eight millions of dollars per annum. If instead of buying this stock in the spring and fall, in equal proportions, it was purchased as the community required, the stock constantly on hand upon which interest is paid would not be more than one-half, or at furthest not over three-fourths what it is now. This would be a saving of interest on one-fourth of the purchase, which is equal to one hundred and twenty-two thousand five hundred dollars per annum, or more than our entire State expenses proper. The depreciation in the value of these goods purchased out of time, will amount to nearly as much more—and this loss has mainly to be borne by the consumers of the goods, in the shape of an enhanced price upon every article they are compelled to purchase.

There are other losses of this kind, which fall more exclusively upon the producer. All along the line of Railroad in New York, beef and pork are taken to New York and Boston fresh, and find a far better market than when salted. The average price paid for pork at Rochester, New York, we are informed, during the winter, was five and half cents, while here it did not exceed three and a half cents, a difference of forty dollars a ton, all owing to the fact that there it was taken to market fresh and here it had to be salted and packed.

The difference between the price of flour during the winter season, when the farmer must sell sufficient to meet his taxes and his annual payments for goods, in this State and New York, oftentimes exceeds by double the cost of transportation. This loss falls upon the producer, for want of a mode of reaching market which will be permanent all the year.

There is another loss more serious, we think, than the one mentioned, connected with the grain trade. The short time between the harvesting of the crops and the close of navigation, compels every one to throw his stock into market, and the consequence is that it is overstocked, freights become exorbitant, and the loss of interest and storage in New York while awaiting a sale, is ruinous to the purchaser. Flour which was shipped from here last fall in November, upon which an advance of three dollars and forty cents was obtained, will not sell now for more than enough to refund the advance, and costs of freight, and various charges consequent upon sending it to market when the avenues are crowded, &c., although the price during the winter of the first quality of Michigan flour has been five dollars. The same scene is re-enacted in the spring—a rush of flour, high freights, an overstocked market, a decline in prices and ruinous losses. This is the routine every year, or twice a year, and the only remedy, or even partial remedy, is to open a channel to market which will not be closed by cold weather.

It is within the recollection of many of our readers, that while the price of flour here was six dollars a barrel, it was ten dollars in New York, a difference of more than four times the cost of transportation by Railway. During the winter months the increase of price in

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New York has but little effect upon our market, because we must wait until summer, before we can reach that market. The losses which the farmers of Michigan have sustained since we commenced exporting flour, for the want of a safe, cheap winter communication with New York, would have nearly constructed the road from here to Buffalo, through Canada.

That we are subject to all the inconveniences and losses we have mentioned, is certain. The evil being admitted, the only question left for us to consider is, where we can find a remedy, and whether it is within our reach. The completion of the railways around the south shore of Lake Erie, it is evident, will not be available to a great proportion of the people of this state, and we cannot therefore look to them as an effectual remedy. Were such roads completed, with branches through the various portions of the state, connecting with this main line, still the increased distance to pass round Lake Erie is such, that a greater portion of our state would be farther from market than Indiana. The expense of transporting all of our exports and imports over this increased distance must be borne by our own citizens. So far as this increased expense enters into our trade, so far we are in inferior position to our neighbors. Can we help ourselves? We believe so.

The charter of the Great Western Railway is all that can be desired for the construction of a road from Windsor to Hamilton and the Suspension bridge at Niagara. No further legislation is required in Canada. The company is fully and efficiently organized, the route has been surveyed by able and competent engineers, the plans all completed, and the entire line located, and contracts entered into for grading and superstructure from the Suspension bridge via Hamilton, London, to Windsor, opposite the city of Detroit. Of the feasibility of the route, there can be no doubt. The chief engineer in his report says, that *"on the whole distance of 228 miles, over 217 miles is perfectly straight, and the length of the located line differs less than four miles from an air line drawn between the same points."* I know of no case in this country or elsewhere, comparable with this, and it is doubtful whether another location of the same extent can be found on the continent so well adapted to the attainment of high velocity and great economy of transportation.

The government of the Province offers to guaranty the bonds of the company equal in amount to one half of the cost of the road. The Provincial securities are now selling in London at about 107, which is equal to about 117 in New York, or 17 per cent premium.

The subscriptions to this stock in Canada amount to about one million of dollars. The company have appealed to the various rail road companies in New York and in Michigan, as well as to the citizens of those states, for aid to complete their important work. A million and a half of dollars, in addition to what has been obtained, with the aid promised by the Canadian Government, will be sufficient. Of this amount Michigan is asked for five hundred thousand dollars. Can this amount be raised? Of this, there is not the least doubt, if every

man who is directly benefited by opening this road will but subscribe a tithe of his real ability.

In New York, not only her citizens favor this road as an important link in the easy communication with the West, but the legislature, with that wise foresight which invited the trade of the West through that state by constructing the Erie canal, has authorized the rail roads to take stock in the Great Western Company, under the belief that it will be greatly to her advantage. In this New York is not mistaken.

In our state the Central Company has asked the same privilege of the legislature. *We think, in an enterprize so important to our state as the speedy construction of this road, the legislature should pass, if practicable, a law authorizing any rail road or other corporation in this state, to subscribe for stock in this company, who can be induced to do it.* It is true, the money is to be expended in Canada, but it will be seen by reference to what we have already said, Michigan will save the amount of subscription asked for in a single year, and the stock, as an investment, will always produce a large return in the way of dividends. It has often been remarked, and with truth, too, that the construction of the Erie canal had a greater effect on the Western States than on New York, and the same thing will be seen by the completion of this road. On the completion of this road, we shall be within 24 hours of New York city throughout the year. We shall have no winter to close up our navigation. No season when we cannot reach our great market—no time when we are shut out from our intercourse with New York. Michigan will then occupy the enviable position of one of the most favored states. Detroit is, by the located lines of this railway, only fifty-three miles farther from Niagara Falls than Cleveland is from Buffalo, and is fifty-two miles nearer than Toledo, and seventy-two miles nearer than Monroe, if her outlet is by the way of Toledo round the south shore of Lake Erie. *In truth, it may be stated as a well settled fact, that no portion of Michigan can afford to go by the south shore of Lake Erie to New York, if they can have a railway connecting with the Canada road.* From Detroit to New York city by this route, it is six hundred and ninety miles, while from Toledo it is seven hundred and forty-five miles. It is a comparison of these routes, the data all being taken from the reports of engineers, that has compelled us to say, that it is for the interest of every county in Michigan—of all our business men wherever located—to have this road through Canada completed. *Michigan cannot afford to pay the additional expense of the long route, if she can possibly get the short one.*

The tide of emigration which has so long passed by us, will pass through our state. Instead of sending an agent to New York to show the great advantages of our state, we shall have the active energy of *sixty millions* of capital invested in rail roads in New York to work for us. Under such a stimulus we may expect our population to double in the next ten years. Capital will flow in upon us, rail roads will be constructed, and manufactories established far beyond what it would now be deemed prudent or safe to predict, lest we might be deemed visionary.

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The effect upon the state would be almost magical. The increased line of rail roads, which it would very materially aid to bring into existence, would probably amount to almost as much more as we have now. The Detroit and Pontiac road would be extended across the state—a road to Port Huron would undoubtedly be constructed, and the Central railway would require a double track immediately, to accommodate the vast increase of business, which would require an outlay of at least four millions of capital. And a road would sooner or later be constructed from some point upon the southern road to connect with the Canada road.

The tax of the Central road with a double track, would be eighty thousand dollars a year, a sum sufficient to meet all the current expenses of our state, while the tax on the increased capital invested in railways in Michigan would furnish all the sinking fund required to liquidate our public debt, without a dollar tax being levied upon the people. With all these facts staring us in the face, when not only the interests of the state, but of every individual almost in it, requires this road to be built, shall we hesitate about taking hold of this in earnest? Do not let us, by any sectional or local jealousies defeat, or delay the speedy completion of this work. Do not let us impose a restriction or condition upon any company, rail road or otherwise, that desires to aid this enterprize, which will defeat or delay it. The stockholders who invest their money, must decide upon the route, and if legislative restriction confines them to a particular line, or compels a change of routes, it endangers, if it does not defeat the whole work, to the great injury of the public, and without any benefit to the particular locality sought to be favored by legislation. The delay of even one year, from any such cause, "is paying too dear for the whistle." The legislature is now in session—it will not be again, probably, in two years. Let them pass such a law as will enable any and all corporations or associations to subscribe to the stock of this road, and then let every individual act thoroughly and efficiently.

There is no difficulty in procuring the necessary subscription to the stock, if the truth is only laid before those having the means. Detroit alone can subscribe two hundred thousand dollars, and pay it without any inconvenience. There are more than five hundred persons in this city, who could each subscribe, and pay in the year, for *four* shares a piece, without scarcely knowing it—while there are many others who can subscribe large amounts, and we have no doubt will do so when they come to look into the whole subject, and give it that consideration which its importance to the state demands.





